

[54] SLIT FIN COIL AND THE METHOD OF MAKING COILS

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[52] U.S. Cl. 165/172; 165/184;

29/157.3 AH

[58] Field of Search 165/172, 184;

29/157.3 AH

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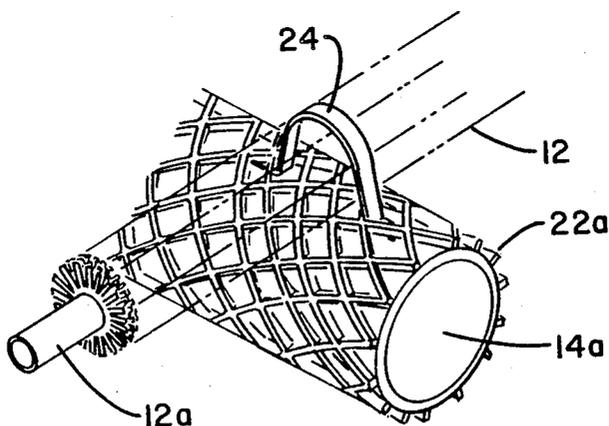
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[57] ABSTRACT

A slit fin heat exchanger is formed by wrapping slit fin tubing into a flat coil having two spaced rows of tubing. The flat coil is located on mandrels which are rotatable about spaced parallel axes with the mandrels and axes initially being in the same plane. A piece of expanded metal is placed between the two rows. The mandrels are rotated about their axes in opposite directions which shifts the plane in which the coil is located. The shifting of the plane of the coil moves a portion of a first row of the coil into contact with a planar portion of a platen and the second row of the coil into a nesting relationship with the portion of the first row which is in contact with the planar portion of the platen and the piece of expanded metal. Continued rotation of the mandrels causes folding of the portions of the coil which extends the area of nesting. The folding takes place through up to 120° and the ends of the first row of the coil contact a portion of the platen causing the formation of a knob at the end of each coil. The piece of expanded metal serves to support the coil such that tube supports are not necessary.

3 Claims, 11 Drawing Figures



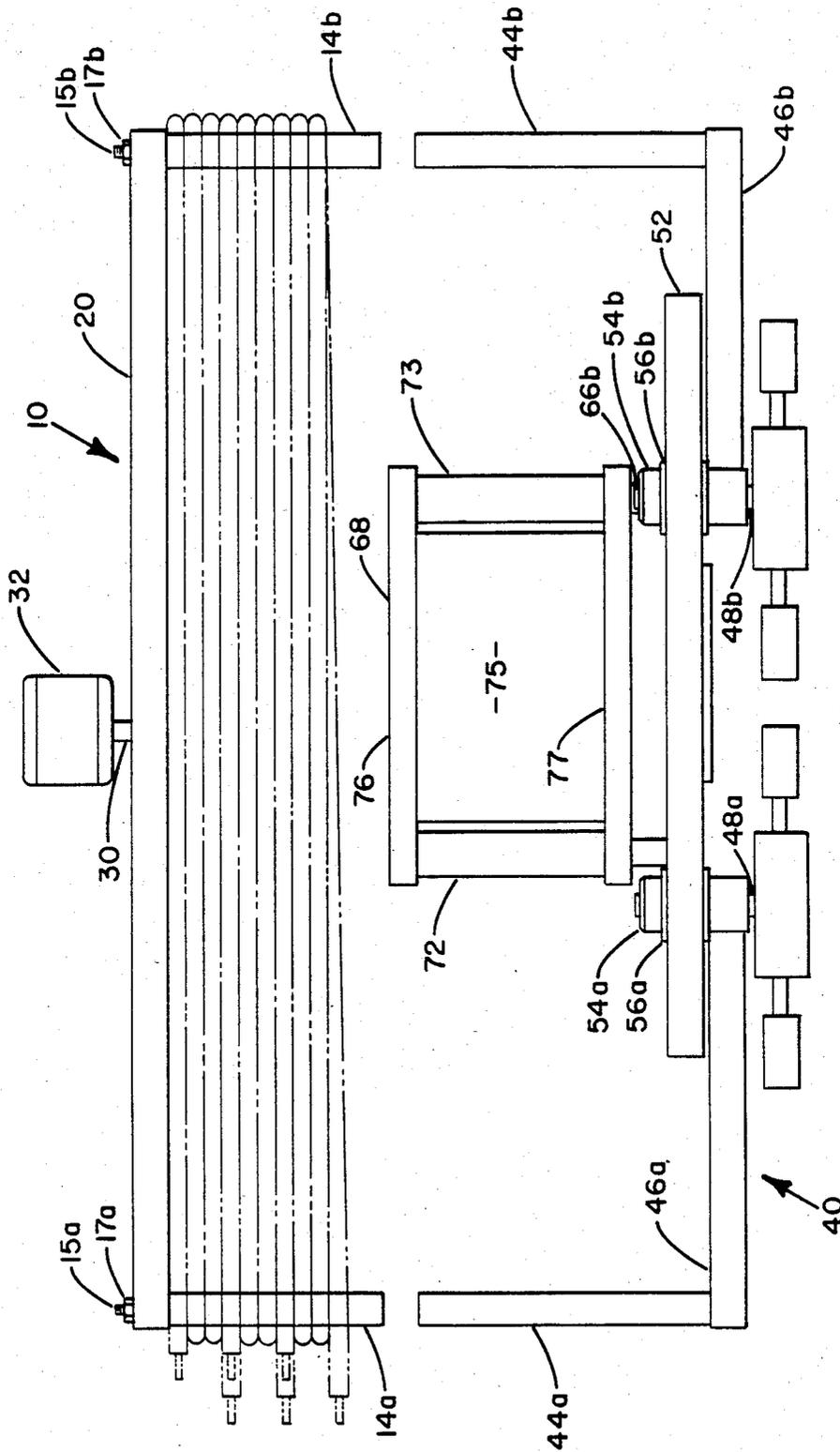


FIG. 1

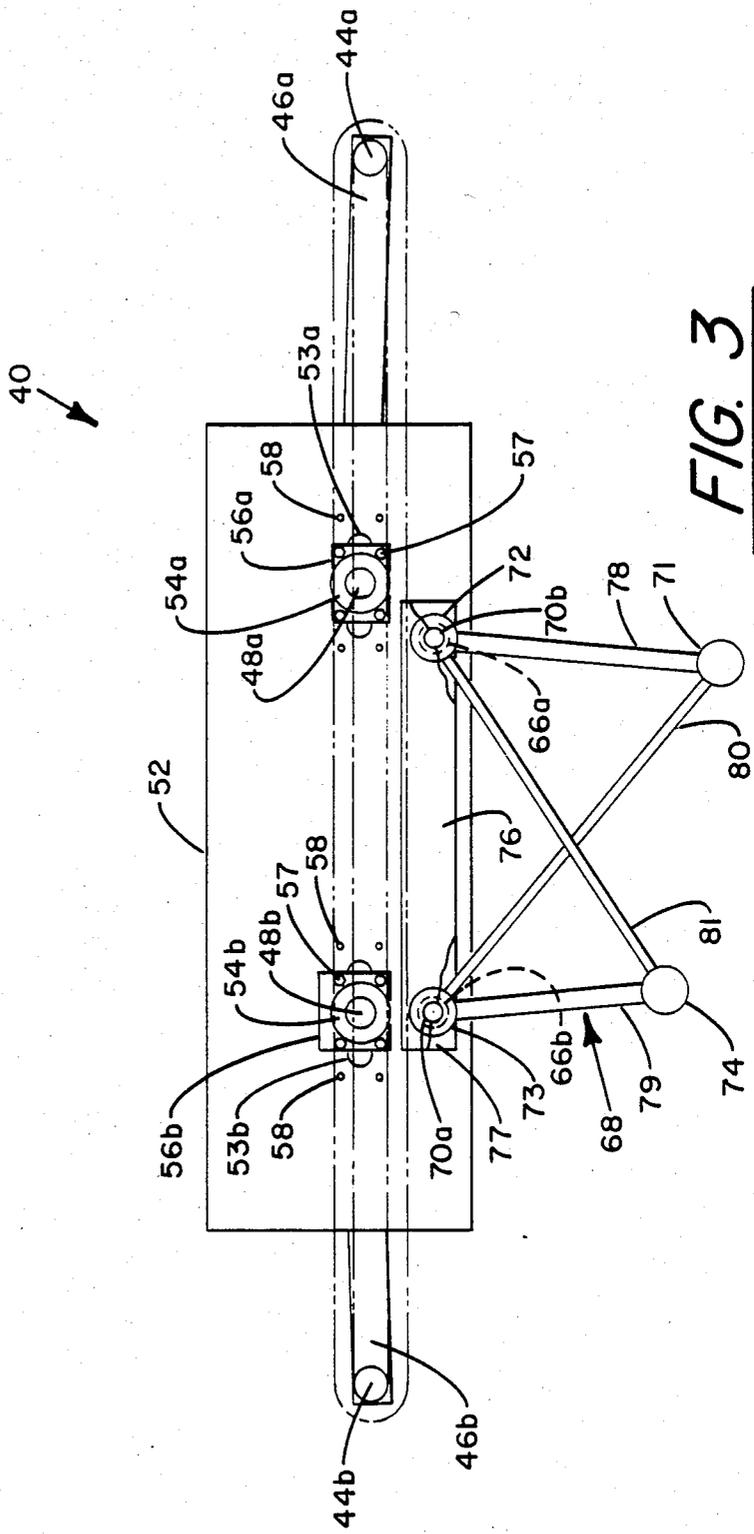


FIG. 3

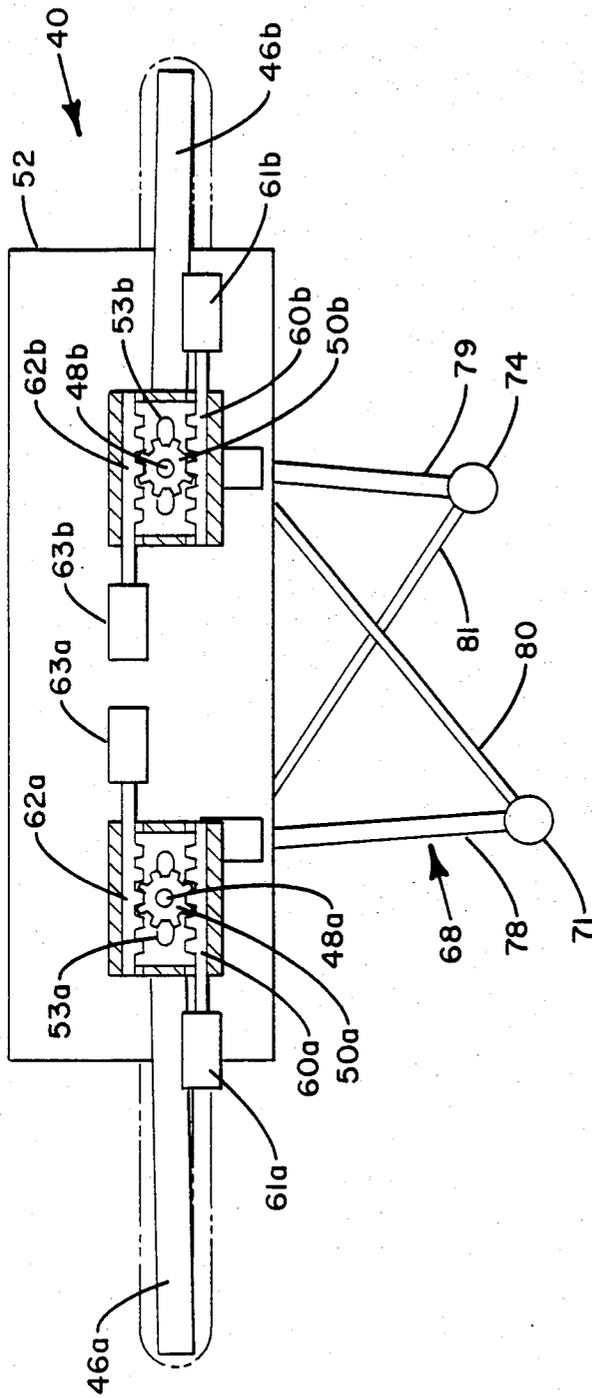


FIG. 4

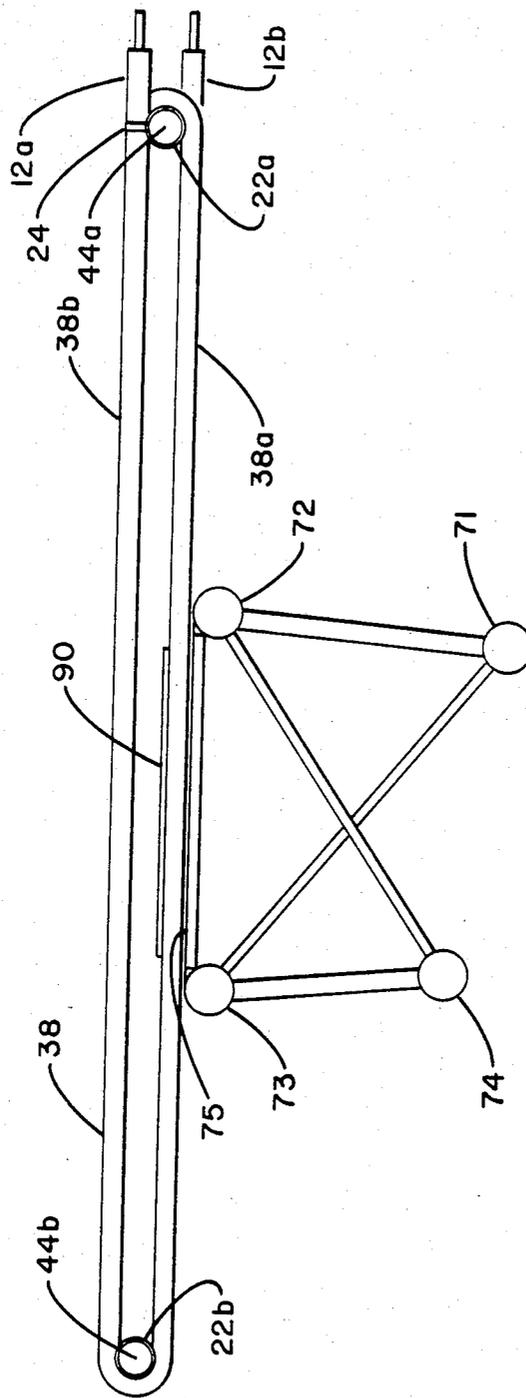


FIG. 5

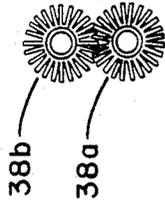


FIG. 6A

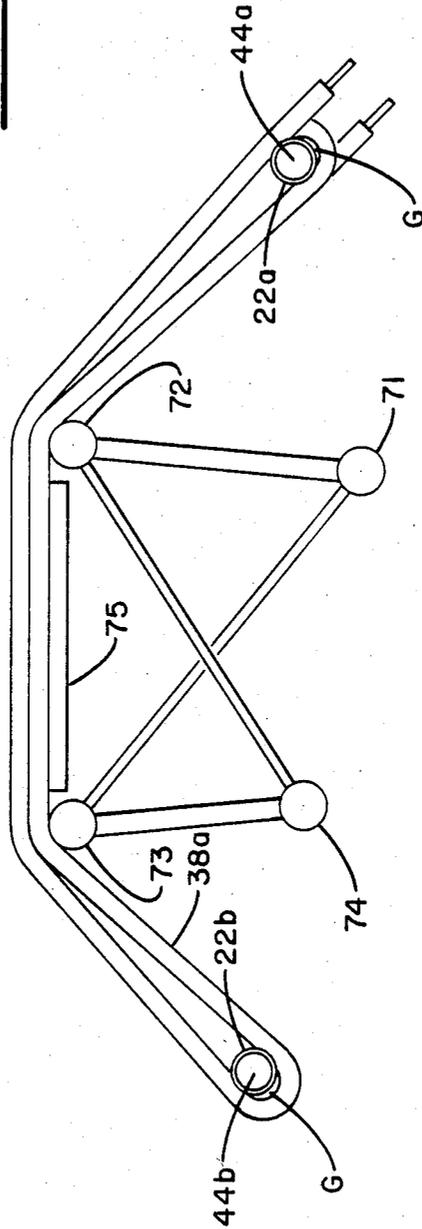


FIG. 6

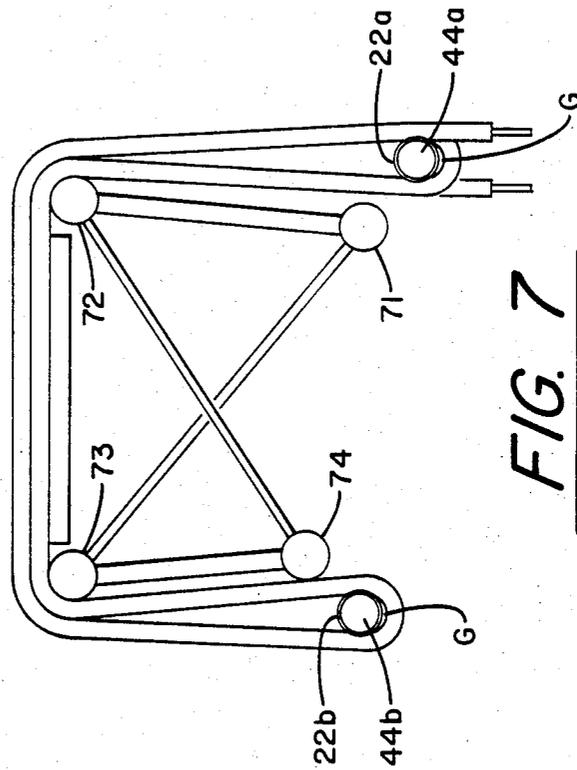


FIG. 7

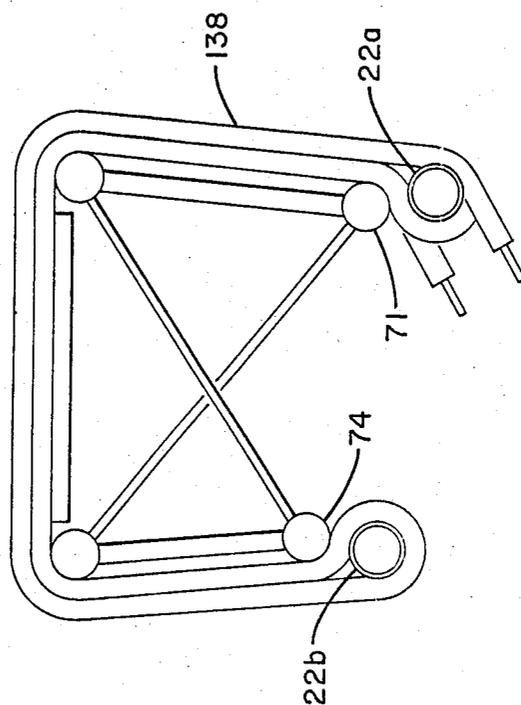


FIG. 8

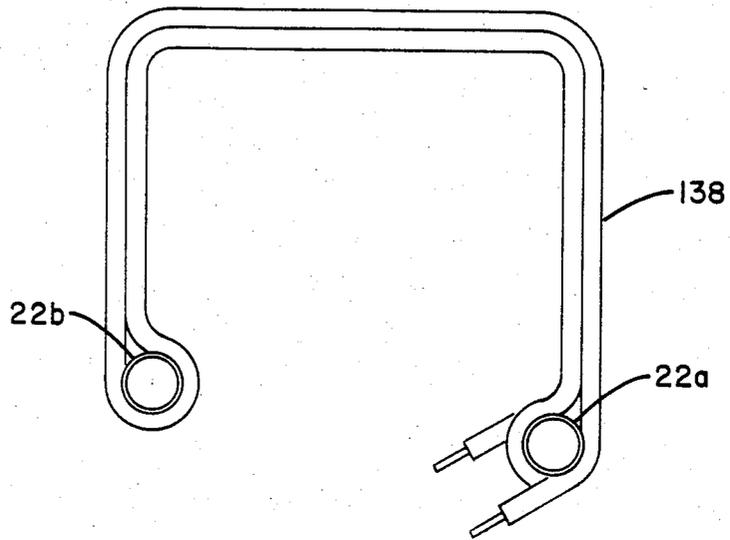


FIG. 9

SLIT FIN COIL AND THE METHOD OF MAKING COILS

This application is a division of application Ser. No. 5 682,114 filed Dec. 17, 1984.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Spined or slit fins are formed from flat stock with cuts made uniformly along each side and with the central portion left intact. The slit flat stock is then bent into a U-shaped configuration with the central un-cut portion serving as the bight or base. The U-shaped slit stock is spirally wrapped about the tubing and is glued or otherwise suitably secured to the tubing with the base or bight in metal-to-metal contact with the tubing. This results in the tubing being covered with radiating spines or tines to produce slit fin tubing stock suitable for use as heat exchange coils.

Conventionally, the slit fin tubing stock has been wrapped around a forming drum with the wraps in a parallel abutting relation to each other to form a plurality of helically wound circuits which, in turn, make up the coil. Terminal leads are provided at each end of the circuits. The forming drum is then removed. Terminal leads at each end of the circuits of the coil are bent, disposed one inwardly of the other so that they are positioned tangent to the same plane, which is perpendicular to the center longitudinal axis of the coil, and then a portion of each terminal lead is cut off and joined to a header. Due to the fragility of the individual spines or tines, any subsequent forming of the coil has been precluded.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Slit fin tubing stock is wound about two mandrels respectively attached to two rotating arms of a coil wrapping machine to form a flat coiled, two row, slit fin heat exchanger. The mandrels are spaced to provide enough material to form the desired coil shape and the distance may be variable to accommodate different coils. The flat coiled heat exchanger can be made up of a number of circuits having their ends strapped or otherwise suitably secured to make the flat coil with a pair of leads extending from the coil for each circuit. The flat coil is removed from the coil wrapping machine and placed upon corresponding mandrels of a coil forming machine. A piece of unflattened expanded metal is placed between the rows of the coil and would be about equal to the height of the formed coil in one dimension. This flat coil can then be formed into a wide range of desired coil configurations according to the teachings of the present invention. Specifically, the flat coil coacts with a fixed platen due to the movement of the two arms of the coil forming machine. The two rows of the coil are brought into a nesting contact with each other and the expanded metal in their center portion with the fixed platen providing support. Because a considerable number of spines or tines initially contact the platen, their collective resistance to columnar buckling provides enough stiffness to prevent any significant deformation of the tines in the central area. As the arms move, the nesting contact between the two rows proceeds from the central section towards the ends. The nesting contact progresses with the bending of the two rows in accordance with the shape of the platen. As the axes of rotation of the arms are in a different plane than the upper surface of the platen, the arms become effec-

tively shorter relative to the coil as they move from a horizontal position. Because of the nesting action, together with the resistance to columnar buckling, the two rows can be bent by folding through at least 120° without significantly deforming the tines and with no more than a 10-20% reduction in the cross sectional area of the tubes. Since in a simple "L", "U" or "C" bend, the outer rows will be bent at a larger radius than the inner rows the difference in lengths of the two rows of coils is compensated at the ends by forming a knob at the end of each coil.

It is an object of this invention to provide a method and for making and forming slit fin coils and the coil produced thereby.

It is another object of this invention to form a slit fin coil by folding a flat coil into a desired configuration.

It is an additional object of this invention to provide a self-supporting coil which does not require coil supports.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a method for forming slit fin coils having multiple bends. These objects, and others as will become apparent hereinafter, are accomplished by the present invention.

Basically, the slit fin tubing stock is wound around two spaced and horizontally extending mandrels of a coil wrapping machine with the slit fin tubing stock being cut to form the required number of circuits. The cut slit fin tubing stock is collectively wound for the required number of turns whereupon the flat coil is removed from the mandrels of the coil wrapping machine and placed on the corresponding mandrels of a coil forming machine. The platen may be in place on the coil wrapping machine or else it is moved into place under the resulting flat coiled, two row, slit fin heat exchanger. A piece of expanded metal is placed between the rows of the coil. The arms carrying the mandrels of the coil forming machine are rotated such that the mandrels are moved through arcs in opposite directions such that the outer ends of the mandrels move downwardly and towards each other. The downward movement of the mandrels initially brings the central portion of the lower rows of coils into contact with the upper planar surface of the underlying platen and brings the tines of the upper rows of coils into nesting contact with the tines of the lower rows of coils and with the expanded metal with the initial nesting taking place for all portions of the coils overlying the platen. Continued movement of the arms brings the mandrels below the upper surface of the platen and causes the folding of the coils. The nesting contact continues to extend toward the mandrels as the mandrels move through their arcs and cause further forming of the coils. Because they bend through tighter radii, the lower rows of coils would extend further from the bend than the upper rows of coils. However, at the mandrel ends the platen deforms only the lower rows of coils to make a knob which additionally nests the upper and lower coils essentially all the way to the mandrel.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a further understanding of the present invention, reference should now be made to the following detailed description thereof taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a top view of the coil wrapping machine and the coil forming machine showing the coil in phantom on the coil wrapping machine.

FIG. 2 is a front view of the coil wrapping machine with a multi-circuit coil being wound thereon;

FIG. 2A is a pictorial view of an end of a coil wrap secured in place on the wrapping machine;

FIG. 3 is a partially cut away front view of the coil forming machine with a coil shown in phantom;

FIG. 4 is a back view of the coil forming machine with a coil shown in phantom;

FIG. 5 is a view corresponding to FIG. 3 but only showing the coil and structure of the coil forming machine and platen which contacts the coil during forming;

FIG. 6 is a view corresponding to FIG. 5 but with the mandrels moved to start forming the coil;

FIG. 6A is a sectional view showing the nesting of the coils;

FIG. 7 is a view corresponding to FIG. 6 but showing further forming;

FIG. 8 is a view corresponding to FIG. 7 but showing the final forming for a "C" or "U" coil; and

FIG. 9 is an end view of the coil of FIG. 8.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In FIGS. 1 and 2 the numeral 10 generally designates the coil winding machine or device. In FIGS. 1, 3 and 4 the numeral 40 generally designates the coil forming machine or device. In FIGS. 1-4 the structure for supporting the coil winding and coil forming devices has been omitted to simplify and clarify the drawings. The support structure can be any suitable support structure, as is well known in the art, which will permit movement of the members necessary for the winding and forming operations. During the winding operation, slit fin coil stock 12 is fed from a source thereof, such as a fin winding machine (not illustrated) as the coil support structure of the coil winding device 10 is rotated. The coil stock 12 is wrapped around parallel, spaced mandrels 14a and b which are suitably adjustably secured to the outer ends of bar or plate 20. For example, the threaded portions 15a and b, respectively, of mandrels 14a and b can be placed in suitable bores 18 and held in place by nuts 17a and b respectively. Shaft 30 is suitably fixedly secured to plate 20 for rotating mandrels 14a and b, and plate 20 as a unit and for winding coil stock 12 onto mandrels 14a and b as is best shown in FIG. 2. Shaft 30 effectively divides plate 20 into two arms and is rotated by motor 32 in a conventional fashion.

Mandrels 14a and b are preferably initially adjustably spaced a predetermined fixed distance apart on bar 20 to obtain the desired coil width. As best shown in FIG. 2A, an end 12a of the coil stock is suitably secured to either mandrel 14a or b. As illustrated, an expanded metal cylinder 22a is initially placed over mandrel 14a and end 12a is secured thereto by a spring clip 24, a wire, twist tie or any other suitable attachment means. An expanded metal cylinder is similarly preferably placed over mandrel 14b. Motor 32 is actuated to cause the rotation of shaft 30, mandrels 14a and b, and plate or bar 20 as a unit which causes the coil stock 12 to be wound about mandrels 14a and b in a flat two row coil 38. As a plurality of circuits are generally required in the coil 38, each time a sufficient number of turns are made for a circuit, the coil stock 12 is cut with each end 12a, 12b, . . . 12n-1, 12n being strapped or otherwise suitably secured, as by spring clips 24, twist ties, etc. in place on mandrel 14a or b or the expanded metal cylinders 22a and b placed on mandrels 14a or b. However,

all of the ends 12a-12n will be on only one of the mandrels 14a or b since they will be connected to headers. After the desired number of turns and circuits have been made, the flat coil 38 is slid from mandrels 14a and b of coil winding machine 10 and placed onto the mandrels 44a and b of coil forming device 40. While mandrels 14a and b and 44a and b are shown as being coaxial, this is not necessary and, in addition, the spacing must be great enough to permit removal of the formed coil 138. If expanded metal cylinders such as 22a and b are placed on mandrels 14a and b, removal of the coil 38 is facilitated as the contact between the tines and the mandrels is greatly reduced. This results in a reduced holding force relative to the mandrels and reduced flexural distortion of the tines upon removal of the coil.

As is best shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, the mandrels 44a and b are fixed at or near the outer ends of arms 46a and b, respectively, which are fixedly secured to and pivoted about axles 48a and b, respectively. Axle 48a has a gear 50a fixedly secured to one end while the other end extends through slot 53a in frame 52 into bearing block 54a. Similarly, axle 48b has a gear 50b fixedly secured to one end while the other end extends through slot 53b in frame 52 into bearing block 54b. Bearing blocks 54a and b are supported on plates 56a and b which are adjustably movable relative to slots 53a and b, respectively, for adjusting the spacing and locations of mandrels 44a and b, respectively. Plates 56a and b are fixedly positioned at the selected position by bolts 57 which extend through plates 56a or b and are threaded into threaded bores 58 in frame 52. Referring now to FIG. 4, gear 50a is in meshing engagement with racks 60a and 62a which are adjustably positioned by hydraulic cylinders 61a and 63a, respectively. Gear 50b is in meshing engagement with racks 60b and 62b which are adjustably positioned by hydraulic cylinders 61b and 63b, respectively. The hydraulic cylinders 61a and b and 63a and b are conventional hydraulic cylinders which are moved in response to pressurized hydraulic fluid supplied by a pump (not illustrated) and are controlled in any suitable conventional manner. The racks 60a and b and 62a and b are guidably secured so that only reciprocating movement under the control of hydraulic cylinders 61a and b and 63a and b and in engagement with one of gears 50a and b is possible. This arrangement affords positive individual bidirectional control over the rotation of arms 46a and b.

Extending outwardly from frame 52, parallel to and in the direction of mandrels 44a and b, are supports 66a and b which are received in corresponding openings 70a and b in platen 68 when platen 68 is positioned on frame 52 of coil forming device 40. The platen 68 is made up of a number of tubular or cylindrical members 71-74 which, when platen 68 is in place on frame 52, are parallel to mandrels 44a and b. Cylindrical members 71-74 and planar member 75 are the only portions of platen 68 to contact the coil 38 during the forming operation and the upper surface of planar member 75 is in a plane essentially tangential with the cylindrical members 72 and 73. Cylindrical members 72 and 73 and planar member 75 are located between plate members 76 and 77. Cylindrical member 71 is connected to cylindrical member 72 via support member 78 and cylindrical member 74 is connected to cylindrical member 73 via support member 79. Braces 80 and 81 serve to support the cylindrical members against the forming forces. Cylindrical members 72 and 73 and planar member 75 must, however, be located in a plane spaced from the

plane containing mandrels *44a* and *b* and axles *48a* and *b* to provide a clearance for placing the coil *38* or platen *68* in place for the forming operation.

In operation, the coil winding machine *10* and the coil forming machine *40* can be proximately or remotely spaced or can be relatively positioned as illustrated in FIG. 1. They must, however, be sufficiently spaced to remove the formed coil from coil forming machine *40*. This permits the flat two row coil *38* to be wound on coil winding machine *10* and then slid or otherwise moved directly onto the mandrels *44a* and *b* of coil forming machine *40* where flat two row coil *38* is formed into coil *138* having the desired configuration.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, mandrels *14a* and *b* are adjustably positioned so as to be properly spaced to form a coil *38* of the proper width to form the desired coil.

Mandrels *14a* and *b* are positioned by placing threaded portions *15a* and *b* through appropriate bores *18* in plate *20* then threading nuts *17a* and *b* thereon. Mandrels *44a* and *b* and corresponding arms *46a* and *b*, are adjusted as units. Specifically, the bolts *57* securing plates *56a* and *b* in place would be removed to permit axles *48a* and *b* to be repositioned within slots *53a* and *b*, respectively, in frame *52*. Since gears *50a* and *b* are fixed to axles *48a* and *b*, respectively, it is necessary to either permit sliding movement of the gear and rack assemblies without rotation of the gears *50a* and *b* or else the gears must be rotated to place the arms *46a* and *b* in their proper orientation. When the axles *48a* and *b* are repositioned in their desired locations, the plates *56a* and *b* are secured in place by threading bolts *57* into appropriate threaded bores *58*. The separation of mandrels *44a* and *b* would be the same as the separation of mandrels *14a* and *b*. An end, *12a*, of coil stock *12* is secured in place on either mandrel *14a* or *b* or, the expanded metal cylinders *22a* and *b* placed thereon by a spring clip *24* or any other suitable means for holding end *12a* in place. Motor *32* is then caused to rotate shaft *30*, plate *20* and mandrels *14a* and *b* as a unit which causes coil stock *12* to be wrapped about mandrels *14a* and *b* in a flat two row coil. When the desired number of turns have been made to form a circuit, the coil stock *12* is cut and the resultant ends *12b* and *12c* are each secured in place on the same mandrel end as *12a*. Motor *32* is then again caused to rotate shaft *30*, plate *20* and mandrels *14a* and *b* as a unit until the desired number of turns are made to form a second circuit. The coil stock is cut and the resultant ends are secured in place on the appropriate mandrel. This procedure continues until the desired number of circuits have been made. The resultant flat two row coil *38* is then removed from coil winding machine *10*. Subsequently, coil *38* is slid onto the mandrels *44a* and *b* of coil forming machine *40*. As the initial, unformed, position of coil *38* should be spaced from the platen *68* to avoid damaging the tines of the tubing when the coil *38* is set in place, platen *68* is normally located in place on frame *52* of coil forming machine *40* when coil *38* is placed on mandrels *44a* and *b* but in a different plane so as to provide a clearance. The platen *68* is secured in place on frame *52* by supports *66a* and *b* which are received in corresponding openings *70a* and *b* in platen *68*.

As best shown in FIG. 3, mandrels *44a* and *b*, and axles *48a* and *b* which are received in bearing blocks *54a* and *b* respectively, are in the same plane prior to the forming of the coil. The upper portion of platen *68* is in a plane below that containing mandrels *44a* and *b* axles

48a and *b* and is located generally coextensively with axles *48a* and *b*. Specifically, tubular or cylindrical members *72* and *73* are generally spaced the same distances as axles *48a* and *b* to promote nesting between the two rows *38a* and *b* of the coil *38* and because their relative positions are factors in determining the length of the arms of the U or C-shaped coil being formed. As viewed in FIG. 3, arm *46a* turns clockwise and arm *46b* turns counterclockwise in forming coil *38*. Because axles *48a* and *b*, mandrels *44a* and *b* and the coil *38* are all initially above platen *68* arms *46a* and *b* must be rotated to lower the coil *38* until row *38a* is in contact with platen *68*. Continued rotation of arms *46a* and *b* brings the center portion of rows *38a* and *b* coil *38* into nesting contact with each other and the expanded metal therebetween and starts forming coil *38* by bending the tubing. The movement of arms *46a* and *b* is controlled by gears *50a* and *b*, respectively. Gear *50a* is, in turn, controlled by the racks *60a* and *62a* through hydraulic cylinders *61a* and *63a*, respectively. Similarly, gear *50b* is, in turn, controlled by racks *60b* and *62b* through hydraulic cylinders *61b* and *63b*, respectively. The use of hydraulic cylinders to position members is well known in the art and takes place in conventional fashion in the present invention so that further explanation is unnecessary.

The forming of the coil *38* into coil *138* will now be described in terms of just the coil *38* and the structure in contact with the coil during the forming operation. FIG. 5 which corresponds to a simplified version of FIG. 3 illustrates the coil *38* in place on mandrels *44a* and *b* prior to any forming action. A piece of expanded metal *90* is placed between the rows *38a* and *b* of coil *38*. The expanded metal *90* will generally have a dimension equal to the height of the coil *138* and will be interleaved or nested into the coil *138* so that it will act to support the coil throughout its functional life as well as during the manufacturing process. Therefore, a separate tube support will not be required. In FIG. 6, the rotation of arms *46a* and *b* has lowered the spaced rows *38a* and *b* of the coil such that the bottom row *38a* is in contact with the tubular members *72* and *73* and planar member *75* of the platen *68* and the central portion of the rows *38a* and *b* have been brought into nesting contact with the expanded metal *90* and each other to effectively lock the two rows together as is best shown in FIG. 6A. The portions of the coil *38* extending past tubular members *72* and *73* have started to be bent downward. The nesting action of the spines affords a stiffening action which resists lateral movement of the spines or tines and holds them such that columnar buckling is the deforming force and the resistance of the spines is greatest with respect to columnar buckling. It will also be noted that mandrels *44a* and *b* have started to move closer together and that a gap *G* is starting to form between each of the mandrels *44a* and *b* and the end of coil *38*.

In FIG. 7, the nesting contact between the spaced coils has advanced further toward mandrels *44a* and *b* locking more of the rows *38a* and *b* together. Because mandrels *44a* and *b* are rotating in arcs with axles *48a* and *b* as their centers, while row *38a* is being formed about tubular members *72* and *73* and row *38b* is being formed about the resulting bends in rows *38a*, the length of arms *46a* and *b* is effectively reduced thereby effectively bringing the mandrels closer together due to the shifting of the plane of the coil *38* from the FIG. 5 position, and enlarging gaps *G*. The effective shorten-

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ing of the arms 46a and b due to the shifting of the plane of the coil 38 allows the tubing to be formed without being subjected to tension from the mandrels 46a and b and the rows 38a and b are in a nested relationship at the bend which permits row 38a of a 3/8 inch diameter tube to be bent on a one inch radius with a flattening or cross-sectional area reduction of only about 10%. It should be noted that in contacting tubular members 72 and 73 on the inside of the bend, the tines of row 38a are moved closer together to have greater resistance to lateral movement and, therefore, greater resistance to columnar buckling.

Since rows 38a and b start out at the same length, the longer distance taken by row 38b in bending around tubular members 72 and 73 is compensated for by placing a knob at each end of the coil as best shown in FIG. 8. Tubular members 71 and 74 contact the corresponding portions of row 38a to complete the nesting action and to form a knob at each mandrel and thereby compensate for the different lengths of the bends of the rows about tubular members 72 and 73 and closes gaps G. The resultant formed coil 138 has a degree of resilience and so bounces back from the most extreme or closed position taken during the forming action which facilitates removal of the coil 138 from the coil forming machine 40. The formed coil 138 is illustrated in FIG. 9. The ends 12a-n would then be attached to headers in a conventional manner to complete the coil. The piece of expanded metal 90 placed between the rows 38a and b, as illustrated in FIG. 5, and the resulting locking action due to the nesting action between rows 38a and b and the piece of expanded metal 90 provides sufficient rigidity to the coil 138 so that tube supports are not required to support the coil.

In the practice of the present invention, the coil stock is aluminum tubing with aluminum slit fins spirally

wrapped thereon. The expanded metal cylinders 22a and b and plate 90 would be of aluminum. In each case, the expanded metal should be unflattened.

Although the present invention has been specifically described and illustrated, other changes will occur to those skilled in the art. For example, although the coil winding and coil forming machines have been described as having mandrels extending horizontally, they could be vertically disposed without changing the principles of the present invention. It is, therefore, intended that the scope of the present invention is to be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A slit fin heat exchanger formed from wrapped fin tubing including a tubular fluid conducting portion and a fin portion defining a plurality of radially extending tines spirally wrapped about said tubular portion comprising:

at least one circuit defining first and second rows of tubing with said tines of said tubing of said first row being in nesting contact with said tines of said second row for essentially their entire lengths to, thereby, lock said first and second rows together; a piece of expanded metal located between said first and second rows and locked in place by said nested tines whereby said heat exchanger is rigidly supported; and said first and second rows having at least one bend with the bend angle being between 30° and 120°.

2. The slit fin heat exchanger of claim 1 wherein said first and second rows have at least two bends having a bend angle between 30° and 120°.

3. The slit fin heat exchanger of claim 1 wherein a plurality of circuits are provided.

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